THE

Best Guide

IN THE

WORST OF TIMES,

Delivered in a

SERMON

AT THE

GUILD-HALL Chappel,

ON

March 27. 1681.

Before the Honourable

THE

ALDERMEN

And several Eminent *Citizens*

Of the CITY of

LONDON.

By *WILLIAM ORME*, Vicar of S. *Bartholomews* the Less, *London.*

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XUM

THE

Bell Guide

WORST OF TIMES

SERMON

To the Right Honourable

Sir *PATIENCE WARD*, Kt.

Lord Mayor

Of the City of

LONDON,

And to the Honourable Court of *Aldermen*.

MY LORD,

THE Honor *and* Obedience, *which is* justly due, *and ought to be given to* Magistratical Authority, *doth many times influence Men to do that, which the sense of their own Unworthiness and Imperfections doth reasonably dissuade them from: Upon which Account, this Sermon is Presented to Publick View, with making its First and Humble Approaches to Your Honour.*

For where should it properly go for Maintenance and Protection, but to that Mansion-House, from whence issued forth the Order, *which caused it to appear thus habited from the Press?*

This Discourse indeed had wit the Honour of Your Lordships Presence, that being prevented by Your Lordships much condoled Sickness: But now it lies under and before Your Lordships eye, not only to be read and examined, but to be taken care of and Defended.

MY LORD,

The Times are Dark and Slippery, wherein a Wise man can hardly find his way; and a Strong Man walk without fear of stumbles and falls: how much more the Ignorant and the Weak?

In compassion therefore to such, I endeavoured all I could to furnish them with the Best Guide, *and* Surest Rule *for their Conduct and Support.* *And*

And if Men would be but as ready and earnest to follow the Advice, which St. Paul gives for their outward Carriage and Conversation, as they are to observe what the Learned gives them, for their Healths and Estates; I am confident Our Clouds of Fears and Jealousies would quickly Vanish: Our Storms of Strifes and Contentions would gather into a Calm; And Our God would defend us from all sorts of Enemies, or else force them to be at Peace with Us.

In short, I have only this to crave, that my Readers will peruse this Sermon, with the like Good meaning and Honest mind, as it was Preached and seemed to be Heard. And be so kind to me, as to cover its faults with Charity, and so kind to themselves, as to put the rest in practice with Diligence and Perseverance.

To the zealous prosecuting of which, we

(of

(of this City especially) have a double Incouragement and Obligation; The First is the Direction of one that was an Infallible Apostle; The other is the Exemplary Pattern of Your Lordships Piety, Prudence and Peaceable Conduct: To whose Fame and Merit, I Offer this as my First-fruits, with Hearty Prayers for Your Lordships Perfect Recovery, and all Possible Assurances, that I Am

Your Lordship's,

And the Honorable Court of Aldermen's

Most Humble and Obedient Servant,

St. Bartholomews the less, April. 18. 1681.

WILL. ORME.

A SERMON

PREACH'D AT

Guild-Hall Chappel, *March* 27. 1681.

PHILIPPIANS I. 27.

The former part of the Verſe.

Only let your Converſation be as it becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt.

THE conſtancy and reality of a Friend is never ſo viſible and known as in the time of ſtraits and neceſſities. The skill and courage of a Pilot is never ſo much tried and proved as when the Veſſel is engaged with a Tempeſt.

In ſuch like ſeaſons as theſe *S. Paul* took the opportunity of ſhewing his admirable prudence and hearty love for and to his *Philippians*, who were in a diſtreſſed and deplorable condition, when he ſent them this Epiſtle.

For first, they were miserably rent and divided by the artifices of some ill-minded men, who partly out of ambition of setting up themselves, and partly out of envy to S. *Paul*'s flourishing fame and Ministry, did all they could (and that under the profession of Christianity too) to alienate the Peoples minds and affections from S. *Paul*, and to crumble them into parties. Of these you read Verses 15, 16. some indeed preach *Christ* even of envy and strife, and some also of good will. The one preach *Christ* of contention, the other of love.

Secondly, They lay under the fearful apprehensions of being assaulted and persecuted by an Enemy from abroad. For there were some at *Nero*'s Court, who (out of inveterate malice to Christianity) had represented to him the many mischiefs and dangers that would attend his Government, if he suffered Christians to encrease and multiply.

Upon which suggestion *Nero* might possibly give orders to fall upon the *Philippians* with Sword and Violence. And of these sort of Enemies, S. *Paul* (who was then a Prisoner at *Rome*, and so might probably hear what was done at Court) gave the *Philippians* notice, with this annexed Exhortation; *But in nothing be terrified or affrighted at the adversaries*; for though they may think to root up Christianity by destroying your lives, yet you shall be saved, the Gospel shall flourish, and they shall come to naught: *For this persecution is an evident sign or token of perdition to them, but to you of Salvation, and that of God*, Verse 28.

And now if we consider these *Philippians* tortured with Inteſtine broils and convulſions, and threatned to be ſet upon with Sword and Perſecution: we may reaſonably conjecture, that they knew not well what to do, nor what courſe to take to ſave and defend themſelves and their newly eſpouſed Religion.

S. *Paul* therefore like an affectionate conſtant Friend, and a moſt skilful Pilate, took their condition ſo far into his pity and conſideration, as to give them the beſt advice and aſſiſtance, and which none but an Apoſtle could give the like.

For if a Church or People are ſhaken and divided at home, or menaced with ruine from abroad, there is no ſuch way for their ſafety and defence, as retreating to the diligent practice of the Apoſtolical advice given in the Text: *Only to let their converſation be as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt.*

In the Opening of which words I ſhall propoſe theſe Four things to be conſidered.

Firſt, That in evil and dangerous Times men ought to be very careful and prudent in the management of themſelves and their converſations.

Secondly, That the beſt and moſt prudent courſe we can take in the ordering of our Converſations is to guide and govern them by the rules and laws contained in the Goſpel of *Chriſt*.

Thirdly, We ſhall conſider wherein the Agreeableneſs of a man's Life and Converſation to the

Gospel of *Christ* doth principally consist.

Fourthly, I shall give some Reasons, why in evil and perillous Times we ought then more especially to be most prudent and careful in governing our Conversations according to the Gospel of *Christ*, and then conclude with Application.

I begin with the *First*:

That in Evil and Perillous Times men ought to be very careful and prudent in the management of themselves and their Conversations. It was in such a like case as this that S. *Paul* proposed this advice in the Text to his *Philippians* observance; and therefore we may reasonably conclude, that the following of it is both seasonable and proper for all persons when surrounded and oppress with troubles and distresses.

What *Conversation* (of which we ought to be careful) doth mean, I suppose every one understands. It being the outward carriage and government of a man's self in this World, or the common and usual course and way of a man's Life and Actions. In the ordering and managing of which, we ought to use our utmost care and discretion: And that upon these following Reasons:

First, Because there is nothing of us falls so much under Humane Cognizance and Observation as this: For how we live, and what we do is exposed to every Eye, and we cannot demean our selves, or be concerned in any worldly Affairs, but many, both

both Friends and Enemies, will take notice of them and make remarks upon them.

And therefore ſince we lye open and naked to the ſight of as Rational and Intelligent perſons as our ſelves, and who will be as curious and Critical to obſerve our way of living, as we are of theirs, certainly it will become us to be very careful and circumſpect how we walk and act in this preſent World.

Secondly, We ought to do it, becauſe that it's from this outward Converſation and viſible courſe of a Man's life, that we all cenſure and judge one another.

We know that they are not a few who are puft up with the Pride and Ambition of ſitting in the Chair, and upon the Bench of Judgment: nor are they leſs numerous, who make it their buſineſs and delight to ſift and cenſure their Neighbours and Brethren.

But if Men will judge as they ought to do, they have no way left them to do it by, but the viſible Actions, and the conſtant courſe of a Man's dealings and converſation.

And if Men will venture to paſs ſentence upon humor and hear-ſay, fancy and opinion, jealouſie and ſuſpicion; I am afraid the Judgment they give, will be found to be as often falſe, as it's malicious.

To know a Man's heart, or to underſtand the frame and temper of a Man's mind and conſtitution, is a Prerogative that belongs to God alone; and therefore there can be no way left for us to know one another by, but the apparent actions and habitual courſe of a Man's life. Now

Now then seeing that it's by this alone that we judge and censure one another, and that upon this our worldly Reputation stands or falls, it will be our interest and prudence to be cautious in what we speak and do.

And though it be impossible to live so warily and without offence, but that some ill natured, and wicked minded men, will maliciously turn all we say to the worst sense, and traduce the most Honest and generous Actions; yet if we can satisfie our Consciences in the Truth of what we speak, and the Righteousness and Justice of what we do, we need not dread the sting and poyson of calumny and slander. For it's found True upon Trial, that a good Honest mind, and a clean life, is armour of proof against all the railings and revilings of malicious Tongues.

Thirdly, We ought to be very careful of our outward Conversation: Because of the good and bad Influences it may have upon others, especially if Providence hath seated us in any degrees of Place, Office, Riches, Parts and Qualities above others.

For of such a spreading and diffusive nature is Conversation, that the next standers-by are tinctured with it, if it be good; but most certainly infected and corrupted by it, if it be bad. And if this be the effect of Conversation among equals, how much more powerful will it be, in those, who are in the highest forms of Dignity and Preferment. For as the Lives and Examples of such Men are more visible and observed, so they carry along with them a kind of Licence and Authority. For the mean

mean and unthinking Vulgar, are apt to believe that they never do ill or amiss, if they do no worse than what they see the Great, Wealthy and Learned daily do.

Now if our Conversations have such an Influence and Operation upon others, we ought then to have a special care in the government of them.

Because if they be Good and Vertuous, we may in time possibly stop the mouths of our Gainsayers, and convert our Enemies from the Errors of their ways: But if they are loose and vicious, we shall give our Adversaries just cause to blaspheme, corrupt our Brethren and Friends, and encrease our own Damnation, by being the unhappy Instruments of destroying many Souls.

The Second Proposition.

That the most Prudent Course we can take with our Conversations, is to guide and govern them by the Laws and Rules contained in the Gospel of *Christ*; and I particularly mention Laws and Rules by way of Explication.

For though it be true, that this Phrase *the Gospel of Christ* doth in Scripture-sense comprehend,

First, All the Essential and Fundamental Articles of our Faith; Secondly, All Good, Holy and Just Laws for our Practice; And, Thirdly, All the great and precious promises for our encouragement here, and recompence hereafter:

Yet as these words *the Gospel of Christ* stand related to the word *Conversation* in the Text, we cannot suppose them taken in that latitude before men-

mentioned, but are reſtrained to that particular part of the Goſpel, call'd Laws and Precepts.

For if *Converſation* doth mean the outward viſible actions, and uſual courſe of a Man's life, then the Goſpel of Chriſt, with reference to them, muſt intend no other, but that part of it which is their Guide and Director, and we all know that the ſtandard and meaſure of Mens lives and actions are Laws and Precepts.

And it's this, and this chiefly, and only, which we are to mind, and take notice of, in the ordering and governing our ſelves and converſations.

It's very poſſible that many Men do wiſh, that there might be found out ſome other way for them to be Chriſtians, and not to be thus ſtrictly bound up to guide their lives and actions by ſuch ſtrait and ſevere Laws which are contained in the Goſpel.

And it's as poſſible that there are others far worſe than theſe, who will preſume to be their own Prieſts and Popes, and take the liberty and power of diſpenſing with the Laws of Chriſt, and live by methods of their own invention and making.

And to an obſerving eye theſe Libertines, who go under the name of Chriſtians and Proteſtants too, are very numerous; for we daily ſee, that Humor and Paſſion, prejudice, and pretence of Conſcience, zeal for a Party, and fondneſs of ſome new Opinion, byaſs of Intereſt, Ambition after Honour and Popular Applauſe, and the grateful reliſh of ſinful pleaſure to fleſhly luſts, have in a great meaſure ſupplanted the Rules and Precepts of our Bleſſed Lord. And Chriſtians for the moſt part chooſe to be under the bondage

dage of ſeveral *Tyrants*, rather than ſubmit to the eaſie and gracious *Monarchy* of Jeſus Chriſt.

But leave we theſe to guide their converſations by what they pleaſe, yet we that intend to be ſuch Chriſtians as the Goſpel requires, are obliged to make the written Laws of God the chief and principal Rule of our Converſations, and that upon theſe three Reaſons.

Firſt, Becauſe of the undoubted perfection and infallible Truth that belongs to them; for they are Laws and Rules without any flaws and errors, which cannot poſſibly deceive or miſguide us, becauſe ſo true, and perfect as to exclude the moſt critical correction and addition.

Whereas the Laws of men, though never ſo exactly weighed at firſt in the balance of the moſt conſidering judgments, and made with the greateſt foreſight and circumſpection, will in a few years appear ſo weak and imperfect, fallible and erroneous, that no one can walk by them without fears, uncertainty and danger.

But the Laws in the Goſpel (becauſe compoſed by a Divine Wiſdom) are ſo ſound and perfect, and free from faults, that no one can live by them, but he walks with all courage and ſafety. So that he, who governs his Converſation by the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, need not doubt or fear his doing ill or amiſs. For in ſuch ways as the Laws of God, *every man*, ſaith *Solomon*, *walks ſafely*; or as the Original, *confidently and ſecurely*, Prov. 3. 23.

Secondly, We have juſt reaſon to make the

Laws in the Gospel the sole rule of our Conversations, because of their Universal benefit and goodness.

For though Laws by some men may be counted evil and prejudicial, because they lay rigours and restraints upon that beloved, darling thing call'd Liberty: Yet the Laws of *Christ* contained in the Gospel are so easie and pleasant, profitable and advantageous to men: that there is no discreet or prudent person, but would have chosen and taken such a method to live by, *could he have had the wisdom and judgment to have found it out.*

Nor doth the goodness and benefit of these Laws give them a Reputation; but the Universality of their Goodness swells their Character.

For let these Laws be put in use and practice in any corners of the Earth, and by men of all Climates and Countries, and they will be continually found beneficial to bodily Health, preservers of mens Credits and Reputations, encouragers of Industry and Faithfulness, distributers of Justice, reconcilers of Enemies, favourers of the Oppressed, promoters of Love and Peace, union and agreement in all Societies, and the great Conservators of all our Temporal felicities.

And what Nation is there, though Heathenish and Barbarous, that could possibly complain of mischief and prejudice, should they govern themselves by these revealed Statute Laws of Heavens?

Thirdly, We ought only to guide our Conversations by these; because of their perpetual fitness and everlasting Equity.

The

The Laws, compoſed and enacted by men, are rightly call'd Temporary, becauſe they are but for certain times and ſeaſons. For theſe, like all Humane Governments and Lives, have their certain Stages and fixed Periods, *And are Born and Live, grow Old and Die.* We our ſelves can obſerve and ſee, that thoſe Acts and Statutes which were good and uſeful, convenient and neceſſary for one Age, become weak and fooliſh, and very fit to be Repealed and Abrogated in the next: Nor have any the reſults and decrees of the graveſt Councils in the greateſt Nations been of any long duration, but ſuch as were either grounded upon, or derived from the Laws of *God* and *Chriſt*.

For ſuch is the Everlaſting Juſtice and Righteouſneſs of our Goſpel Laws, that they will never grow old or out of uſe as long as the world endures; for men in all Ages and in all Countries will conſtantly find it fit, and juſt, and reaſonable to live by them.

And in this *ſence* perhaps it's to be taken ſometimes, when the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, *That the Word of God abideth for ever*; that is, the Laws and Precepts contained in it are ſo well ordered, tempered and prepared, that they will laſt for ever, and be found fit and reaſonable to be obſerved by all men, at all times, and in all places of the World.

So that if we conſider the truth and perfection, the Univerſal goodneſs, and perpetual fitneſs of theſe Sacred Rules, we may reaſonably conclude, there is no ſuch Guide for our *Converſation* as the Goſpel of *Chriſt*.

And therefore S. *Paul* did wiſely adviſe his *Philippians* and all Chriſtians, to be principally careful

in letting their *Conversations only be as becometh the Gospel of Christ.*

I come now to the *Third* Particular; which is to shew wherein the Agreeableness of a Man's *Conversation* to the Gospel of *Christ* doth consist: And that briefly doth consist in these Two General Things.

First, *In the constant practice of Purity and Holiness.* Secondly, *In the exercise of Meekness and Moderation, and whatever promotes Unity, Peace and Charity with all men.*

First, *In the constant practice of Purity and Holiness.* And indeed we could not well expect that the design of Christianity should tend to any thing else; because the Author of that Religion was himself a person that knew no Sin, and led a most Exemplary life in all the paths of Piety and Vertue: And because the Holy Ghost who prepared all mens hearts to receive the Gospel by a lively Faith, is a pure and undefiled Spirit.

And if we will also but consult what was partly spoken by *Christ* himself, and partly dictated by this Holy Spirit, we shall easily see that a Good and Holy life is most agreeable to the Contents of the Gospel.

For *First* of all, It commands us to *abstain from all appearance of evil*; to withdraw from the first courtships of Sin. For it lays restraints upon our Minds, Thoughts, and Lusts after any thing that is Vile and Wicked: And assures us that we are defiled, if Sin be but conceived in the Heart, though it be

be not brought forth into Act: As in the caſe of *bare luſting after a Woman*, and of *harbouring Malice and Revenge* but in the inward thoughts and intentions.

Secondly, It doth poſitively prohibit, and that under ſevere penalties, all and every action that renders a Man's Converſation vile and odious, baſe and ſcandalous, mean and contemptible. Namely, all carnal uncleanneſſes; Surfeitings, Drunkenneſs, Swearing, Curſing, Lying, Perjury, Bribery, Oppreſſion, Couzenage and Fraud, Sloth and Idleneſs, Irreligion and Profaneneſs. And the reaſon why the Goſpel would have us to abſtain from all theſe things is, That our God and Creator might not be diſhonoured, and that his and our Enemies might not have occaſion to blaſpheme us and our moſt Excellent Religion.

Thirdly, It preſſes upon us the conſcientious practice of every Grace and Vertue, and to adorn our Profeſſion and outward Converſation with the flowers and fruits of Good Works.

This is the will of God; ſaith S. *Paul*, *our Sanctification*. And the *Grace of God*, the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, *which hath appeared, and brings Salvation to all men; teacheth us to deny Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and to live Righteouſly, Soberly, and Godly in this preſent world; looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purifie unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, Titus 2. 11, 12, 13, 14. And it was the charge of *Chriſt* to his followers, That they ſhould let their *lights ſhine before men*, that

is,

is, be Examples and Patterns of Piety and Holiness to all the World.

In short: The Gospel of our Lord and Saviour doth strictly prohibit all Sins and Vices, and every evil work which defiles a Man's mind, or weakens his Body, or blemishes his Fame, and wastes his Estate.

And secondly, it doth with great Authority enjoyn the practice of all Goodness and Vertue, and every thing else that is worthy of praise. And therefore that Life and Conversation which becomes the Gospel, must in the first place be Pure and Holy, clean and undefiled.

Secondly, The Conversation which becometh the Gospel of Christ, is that which is managed with all *meekness and moderation* in the mind and spirit; and which carefully promotes Union, Peace and Love in the World.

This is apparent from our Saviour's command, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in mind*; and from the Apostles direction, that *we should be mean in our own eyes, in honour preferring one another, and to condescend to men of low degree, and to let our moderation be known unto all men*; So that the frame and temper of Mind and Spirit, with which we are to govern our selves, is to be *meek and humble, soft and gentle, calm and moderate* to all we converse with.

Again, the Gospel of Christ directs us to further all the degrees of Love, Amity and Quietness; Our Saviour having call'd all *Peacemakers the Children of God*, and pronounc'd them happy; and also declared

rod who are the heavenly-born Chriſtians, even they *that love one another.*

And how frequently do all the Apoſtles command and order us to be of modeſt and peaceable behaviour, and to live in an unfeigned mutual love one with another: As *Rom.* 12. 9, 10, 17, 18. *Let love be without diſſimulation. Be kindly affectioned one towards another, in brotherly love, in honor preferring one another. Recompence to no man evil for evil, provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men: And if it be poſſible, as much as in you lies, live peaceably with all men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edifie one another,* Rom. 14. 19.

And the moſt paſſionate and earneſt requeſt, that ever St. *Paul* made in his life, was that to his *Coloſſians. Put on therefore (as the Elect of God, Holy and beloved) bowels of mercy, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long ſuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any; even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye. And above all theſe things put on Charity, which is the bond of Perfection:* Coloſſians 3. 12, 13, 14.

And as the Goſpel of Chriſt doth commend to our ſtudy & practice, unity, peace and love, & every thing that promotes their flouriſhing growth; ſo it forbids whatever may obſtruct and hinder it.

As namely, all raſh cenſuring and judging, talebearing and backbiting, whiſpering of lies and ſcandals, publiſhing of Libels and defamations, charging us not to give railing for railing, but to avoid all occaſions of janglings and quarrels, and to keep our ſelves from proud, peeviſh and paſſionate humours, and ſowing the ſeeds of ſtrife and ſedition. And what

what is the great end and design of all these Evangelical Laws? but only, *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty:* 1 Timothy 2. 2.

And thus very *briefly*, I have shewed what that Conversation is, which becomes the Gospel of *Christ*. All which is excellently comprised in those words of the Apostle, *Rom.* 14. 17. *The Kingdom of God*, that is, the Gospel-dispensation doth *not consist in meats and drinks*, in controversies and disputes about things *Indifferent:* but in solid *Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost.*

And the like character doth St. *James* give of the Religion and Gospel of Christ. For, saith he, *If you have bitter envying in your hearts*, then the Religion which you have and profess, is *Earthly, Sensual and Devilish.* But the Religion which is from above, and came from God and Christ, teaches all Men, first, to be *Pure and Holy*; and secondly, to be *Peaceable and gentle, easie to be entreated, full of mercy, and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisie: And the fruit of Righteousness is sown in Peace of them that make peace:* James 3. from Verse the 13. to the end of the Chapter.

And so much for the Third Particular.

I pass to the *Fourth.* To consider the Reasons, why in Evil and Perilous Times, we should then more especially lead pure and peaceable Lives according to the Gospel of *Christ.*

And

And the Reaſons are theſe Three.

Firſt, That we may, if poſſibly, prevail with God to be our favourer and friend: And this is no ſmall Argument to perſwade us to be more Holy and Religious in dangerous and evil Times than at any other.

Becauſe then it is we ſtand moſt in need of having God our Aſſiſtant and Defender. For it's he alone which hath the ordering and managing of all Humane Greatneſs and Wiſdom, and worldly affairs, which generally have their Events and Succeſſes, according as God approves or diſlikes the perſons in whoſe hands they are plac'd.

For you muſt know, that let the Cauſe or Deſign be what it will, that any Nation or number of Men do take in hand, yet there is an Over-ſeeing Eye, and an Over-ruling Hand, which turns and diſpoſes all things to the advantage of them that endeavour to pleaſe him, and to the deſtruction of them whom he is juſtly provok'd to hate.

And therefore in all Humane undertakings, and Publick affairs, it will be the prudence and intereſt of men, to gain, if poſſibly, the great God on their ſide.

For if men will coin Projects and Deſigns in their own inventions; If they will uſe their own art and skill in the management of them; and relye upon their own parts and power to bring them to paſs, and all this without any concern or care, whether God be their Friend or not: I think ſuch perſons have no good grounds to hope, that any proſperous

events will crown their enterprize or endeavours.

The *Royal Prophet*, who had run through as many various ſtages of Humane affairs, and Worldly changes, as ever any Man or Monarch did, and who had obſerved that Providence did always interpoſe his Wiſdom and power in the ordering and diſpoſing of all things here below, did at laſt conclude with this Maxim;

That the Greateſt worldly Power, and the deepeſt Policies of States-men were weak and fooliſh, if God did not take the Actors under his Countenance and Protection.

Hence it was that he attributed the Art and Abilities which Men uſe in the building of an Houſe, and the power of preſerving and defending a City when built, not unto the Men themſelves, but unto the Great God, who is the Maker and Upholder of all things: *Except the Lord build the Houſe, they labour in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the City, the watchman waketh but in vain,* Pſal. 127.1.

After the ſame manner, he attributes all Conqueſts and Victories, not to the courage and conduct of Generals and their Armies, but unto the God that goes along with them, and fights for them: *Pſal.* 108. 11, 12. *If thou, O Lord, go not forth with our Hoſts, we cannot be ſaved from trouble; for vain is the help of Man.*

Nay, though *David* was conſiderably aſſiſted ſometimes by Princes and Allies, and though he had often ſeen the undaunted briskneſs and courage of his own Souldiers in many Battels, yet he at laſt found it experimentally true, *That it was better to truſt in the Lord, than to put any confidence in Man: That it was better to truſt in the Lord, than to put any confidence in Princes.* And

And at another time, when this *Royal Prophet* was in the greatest straits and dangers; and few would side with him or fight for him: yet even then he was confident of Deliverance and Victory, and that because he found God to be his Friend. *The Lord is on my side, I will not fear: For what can Man do unto me? The Lord taketh my part with them that help me, therefore shall I see my desire upon mine Enemies,* Psal. 118. 6, 7.

And as all the power and force of Armies without God's favour and assistance is frail and weak, so the most subtil and deepest contrived designs of the ablest Politicians, without Divine help and approbation, withers and proves abortive.

With what wrath and malice did *Sanballat* and *Tobiah*, the *Arabians*, the *Ammonites*, and the *Asbdodites* sit in Council, and secretly conspire to surprize and fall upon *Nehemiah* and the *Jews*, just as they were employed and busie in building the walls of *Jerusalem?* But God, saith the Text, defeated this stratagem; *for God brought their Counsel to nought*, Nehem. 4. 7, 8, 15.

In all *David*'s Kingdom there was not a greater States-man than *Achitophel*, and we find he proved a good Counsellor as long as he was *Loyal* to his *Prince*: But when he entred into a conspiracy with *Absalom*, to raise a War and Rebellion against his King and Father, how soon was all his wisdom turned into foolishness? And the Text tells us it was God himself that did it; 2 *Sam.* 17. 14. *For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good Counsel of* Achitophel, *to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon* Absalom.

Now then if God's love to us, and helping of us be ſo abſolutely neceſſary, as that without it, we cannot either do what we deſign, nor finiſh what we are doing, nor be releaſed from what we ſuffer, nor be ſecured and ſaved from what we fear, then it will be our higheſt wiſdom, and greateſt Intereſt to engage God (if poſſibly) to eſpouſe our Cauſe, and take our part.

For according to the meaſure of God's will revealed, and the uſual proceedings of Providence in this World, we ſhall find that Good and Holy Men have never been forſaken of God, in any portion of their Lives.

For God is ſuch a Lover of Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs, and what is like himſelf, that he hath given us all poſſible Aſſurances of providing for the Innocent, defending the Helpleſs, relieving the Oppreſſed, and of favouring the Righteous dealings of Men.

Upon which account it is, that God is ſo oft in Scripture call'd a Tower, a Caſtle, a Fortreſs, a Rock of Defence, a Refuge in ~~due~~ time of Trouble, a Saviour and Mighty Deliverer.

And if we can but in any reaſonable meaſure imitate *David* in his ſincere Piety and Holineſs, we ſhall then have the ſame cauſe and occaſion to ſay with him, *That the Angel of the Lord pitcheth his Tent round about them that fear him. That the Lord never faileth them that put their truſt in him.* That *he is a Sun and a Shield*, that *he will give grace and glory*, and *no good thing will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly*, Pſalm 84. 11. Suitable to which are thoſe words

words ſo confidently ſpoken by St. *Paul: We know that all things work together for good to them that love God*, Romans 8. 28. To which may be adjoyned the aſſurance of Chriſt himſelf. *If ye ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, all theſe things ſhall be added unto you*, Matth. 6. 33.

Seeing then that a Holy Religious Life is ſo beneficially operative and prevailing with God, we ought in evil and perilous days to be then moſt carefully employed in it.

For then is the time, we ſtand moſt in need of God's Power, Love and Protection, when we ſee our ſelves forſaken of all worldly helps and aſſiſtances. And when there is nothing but Clouds and Darkneſs round about us, then is the light of God's countenance moſt chearing and refreſhing. Nor doth Divine wiſdom and Power ſo much delight, and raviſh our Souls, as when it diſcovers the Snares that were laid for us, and ſaves us juſt upon the brink of falling into them.

And that a good and holy Life is thus prevalent with God, to protect and defend, ſave and deliver us in evil and dangerous times, we have the Teſtimony of Men in all Ages, both of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Church, who by one ſignal Demonſtration have declared it to be an undoubted Truth, and the conſtant matter of their Faith.

And this Demonſtration was their uſual exerciſe of one ſolemn Religious Duty or Service, peculiarly appropriated to the particular time of worldly Adverſity and Temporal Judgments, call'd by the name of Faſting and Humiliation.

For

For we all very well know, that publick or private Fasts are never appointed or kept, but when a Kingdom or Person is under some heavy Pressures and Afflictions, or the fear and apprehensions of some approaching danger and misery, or for the commemorating some signal Judgment and Calamity that is past, and we were mercifully saved and delivered from.

Now what is this Fasting or Humiliation, but a taking a Revenge on our Sins, which caused God to be our Enemy: A putting our selves upon bettering our lives, and to be for the Time to come more Godly, Righteous and Sober in this present World.

And what is the end and design of exercising these Religious Duties upon such particular Days; but only to seek and find (if possibly) God's favour, to reconcile our selves to him, and to prevail with him to stand our Defence, and become our Saviour.

So that we can never religiously observe days of Fasting and Humiliation, but it's with a belief, that if we do amend our ways, and better our lives, then God will be favourable to us, and deliver us from all the Judgments we groan under, and prevent the Sorrows and Calamities which we justly fear are coming upon us.

But against what I have said, I know it will be Objected, That though it be true, that God in his revealed will hath given Promises and Assurances of providing for, and protecting and defending the Good and Righteous, yet we see frequently in the outward Dispensations of Providence, that God is not always firm to his word.

For

For how often do we see the wicked flourish, and prevail and triumph over the godly, and those that are far better than themselves? As at this Day, the *Turks* trample upon the Christians, and the *Papists* upon the Protestants.

To this I Answer, *First*, In General, That the Proceedings of Providence, and the Methods of God's dealings with Men in this World are very Mysterious: So that we may justly subscribe to that saying of the Apostle, *Romans* 11. 33. *How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways past finding out?*

But *Secondly*, To be more particular in the Solution of this Objection: I shall only desire you to observe, That though there are many Men, which, as to all outward Appearance, and in our Esteem, are very Pious and Good, yet there are none so Vertuous and Good as they should be, and as they might be. And therefore God makes use of Prosperous wicked Men, as Rods to correct them, who thorough their own Carelesness or Idleness might be much better than they are.

And not to meddle with the Reasons, which Statesmen give for the Growth of *Mahometism* over Christians, and of *Popery* over Protestants; I shall only offer one, which the most censorious Critick will allow, doth belong to our office to give. And the Reason is this: The Christians in General notoriously abusing their most Excellent Religion; And Protestants in Particular not living in that Measure of Piety and Vertue, which is suitable to the Purity of their Doctrines.

And it's very Probable, that God afflicts and chastises Christendom with the *Turks*, because All sorts

of

of Chriſtians ſo much neglect the living anſwerably to their Religion. And God doth trouble and Correct the Proteſtants in *Europe* with *Papiſts*; Becauſe (though their Religion be beſt, as being *Reformed* from *Superſtition*, *Hereſie* and *Idolatry*) yet the viſible Converſations of Proteſtants are notoriouſly Scandalous, and quite different from, and oppoſite to that Purity and Godlineſs, which they Profeſs and Glory in.

And for ought any Man can yet ſee or know to the contrary, We may reaſonably Judge, that God will ſuffer the *Turks* and *Papiſts* to Proſper and Prevail, the one over Chriſtians in General, the other over Proteſtants in Particular, till ſuch time as both are more zealous and careful than they are now, to let their Converſations be as becometh the Goſpel of *Chriſt*.

But *Secondly*, Another Reaſon why in Evil and Perilous Times we ought then to be moſt Holy and Good, is this, That thereby we may ſtop the mouths of our Gainſayers, and either convince our Enemies, or at leaſt prevail with them, to have a better Opinion of us, than now they have.

In a Kingdom or Nation crumbled into ſeveral Factions and Parties, we can expect no leſs, than Violent Heats and Paſſions, and bitter Railings and Revilings one againſt another. For we know, that different Perſwaſions and Intereſts were ever upheld with fierce Controverſies, zealous Debates, and clamorous Janglings: All which things never tend to cement and heal Diviſions, but make the Rent much wider: For it's Rarely ſeen, that Controverſies and Diſputes (eſpecially in Religion) brought Enemies to be Friends.

No

No, the only way of ſilencing our Adverſaries, and taking them off from Slandering and Reviling of us, is to abſtain from the evil things, which may give them a juſt cauſe of doing it.

And though the World will ſtill be peſtered with ſuch Critical and Malicious Inquiſitors, as will Cenſure and Condemn the moſt harmleſs and Inoffenſive Actions, (and which they would allow to be ſo, if done by themſelves) yet the man that goes on in the conſtant courſe of an Upright Honeſt Converſation, will in Time convince his Gainſayers, and Proſelyte his moſt ſpightful Enemies.

Was it not the Advice and Command of our Saviour; *That we ſhould Bleſs them that Curſe us*; *And pray for them that Deſpightfully uſe us?* And doth not S. *Paul* ſay, *If thine Enemy hunger, feed him*; *If he thirſt, give him Drink?* And what is the Fruit and the Benefit we ſhall reap by it? Why, *In ſo doing Thou heapeſt coals of fire upon his Head*; that is, Thou wilt in time melt him down into Brotherly Love and compliance.

And what was the Reaſon, that S. *Peter* charged his Converts to be Quiet and Peaceable, Subject and Obedient to Magiſtrates and Governors? Only that thereby They might ſtop the mouths of their Adverſaries, who had Repreſented them at *Caeſar*'s Court, to be men of Turbulent, Factious and Seditious Spirits: *That ſo with Well-doing*, ſaith S. *Peter*, *ye may put to ſilence the Ignorance of Fooliſh men*, 1 Pet. 2. 15.

And in another place he Adviſes them to keep and preſerve a *Good Conſcience*, for in time it will make them *aſhamed*, *that falſly accuſe you*, 1 Pet. 3.

16. I shall conclude this Second Reason with the Caution of S. *Paul*, *Ephes.* 5. 15, 16. *See that you walk Circumspectly, not as Fools, but as Wise: And that you walk in Wisdom toward them that are without, Redeeming the time*, Colos. 4. 5.

Thirdly, We ought most especially to *Guide our Conversations only by the Gospel of Christ, in Evil and Dangerous Times*; because we shall thereby be best fitted and prepared to meet with, and endure the worst that may befal us.

When we are in the Prospect or foresight of any Calamity or Misery coming upon us, we have but Two things to do, either Prudentially to prevent it, or else prepare our selves to bear it.

First, Prudentially to Prevent it, especially, if it be capable of Prevention: For the Gospel of *Christ* doth not so Positively and Indispensably oblige us to take up our Cross, as that we may not use all the Wisdom and means we can, to save and defend our selves from suffering; No, in all Temptations and Trials, it's lawful for us to make a way for an Escape.

But then We are to observe, that the Scripture allows of no means to be used for the Preventing of an Approaching Evil and Danger, but what is Honest, and Just, and Lawful.

For the Rules of the Apostle are Perpetually True, and of Everlasting Force, *That We must abstain from all Appearance of Evil:* And *that we must not do Evil that Good may come thereby.*

So that though my own Will and Reaſon byaſſed by Self-love and Intereſt ſhall put me upon Preventing a Miſery that is coming, yet I muſt be cautious and careful of uſing any ways and means for the Doing of it, which I cannot juſtifie to be Good and lawful by the Word of God, or which my own Conſcience ſhall tell me is Baſe and Diſhoneſt, and unbecoming a Man and a Chriſtian.

For *firſt*, I have no Divine Warrant or Licence to do any Unjuſt Act, though it be for my Temporal Safety and Worldly Advantage.

Secondly, I have no Promiſe or Aſſurance from God, that the Doing of an Unjuſt thing for this End and Purpoſe ſhall ever Thrive and Proſper: For God hath no where told us in his Revealed Will, that he will bleſs a Man in any wicked Deſign and Undertaking.

And therefore, if for my own Preſervation I ſhall make uſe of ſuch Means and Methods, which I cannot, and dare not Pray God to bleſs and aſſiſt me in, and wherein I cannot reaſonably expect that God will bleſs me, then certainly it will be a very Doubtful and Hazardous Caſe, whether the means I uſe, will ever prevent that Evil or Miſery, which I thought and concluded they would. And the Reaſon is plain, becauſe I take upon me, and that upon my own contrivance and Deſign, to do that for my ſafety and Preſervation, which my own Conſcience (if Guided by God's Will) will tell me, I cannot expect God's Bleſſing and Aſſiſtance in, nor any happy Succeſs from it.

But *Secondly*, If in the use of lawful means, our Approaching Misery and Ruine cannot be Prevented; we have then nothing else to do, but to put our selves in the best Posture we can to meet with it and endure it.

Now there is nothing so compleatly Arms and Qualifies a Man for all sorts of Worldly Afflictions, as the constant inuring a Man's self to a holy Gospel-conversation.

When St. *Paul* had been well trained up in the Spiritual Warfare, he did not then fear to grapple with the worst of evils, nor dread to engage the Greatest Perils.

Indeed to a Worldly covetous Man, the loss of Lands, Houses, and Riches, is a very hard saying; To an Ambitious Spirit, that aimes at Crowns, and the Enlargement of Dominion; Imprisonment and parting with an Head, is an Intolerable Affliction: To one that spends his Time and Strength in Jollity and Pleasures, the thoughts of Dying is Dreadful and Troublesome.

But to a Man that hath got the Dominion over himself, who hath tamed his Will, Affections and Lusts; To one that scorns and despises the guilded Vanities, and empty splendors of the World; To one that hath his conversation in Heaven, whilest upon Earth, and hopes for Rewards and Treasures above; there is nothing comes to him Unlook'd for or Unpleasant.

In short, The more like we are to Christ in the constant Course of a Good and Vertuous Life, the more able shall we be to suffer with him, and like him: For, let come what will to us, whether *Tribulation*,

bulation, or Diſtreſs, or Perſecutions, or Famine, or Nakedneſs, or Peril, or Sword, yet in all theſe things, we ſhall be more than Conquerors, thorough him that loved us, Romans 8. 35, 37.

Application.

And *Firſt*, If we ſhall judge (as reaſonably we may) that we are under the ſame, or like troubled and diſtreſſed circumſtances with theſe *Philippians*, Torn and Harraſt with Unnatural Heats and Diviſions amongſt our ſelves, or threatned with Ruine by Reſtleſs and Implacable Enemies from abroad; We have then no better way or Courſe to take for our Safety and Defence, but cloſely and earneſtly to follow this *Beſt Guide* and *Sureſt Rule*: Only to take all care and heed, that our Lives and Converſations be, as becometh the Goſpel of *Chriſt*.

Whatever Methods others in Diſtreſs and Danger may chooſe to take and follow, yet let us ſhew our ſelves the true Chriſtians, by making the Laws of Chriſt, and the Rules of the Goſpel the ſole Standard and only Meaſure of all Our Actions.

For ſure we are, that the Guidance and Directions of the Wiſeſt Councellors upon Earth are not ſo free from Errors and Defects, deceiveableneſs and Dangers, as the Precepts of *Chriſt*: nor can they be of ſuch certain and Univerſal Goodneſs, nor ſo juſt and fit, and Reaſonable for us in all Circumſtances of Time and Place: And *none can or will dare to ſpeak againſt this, but Platonick Republicans, Hobbean Politicians, Atheiſtical Stateſmen*, and thoſe who diſlike the Goſpel, becauſe they deſign to do, what they know the Goſpel condemns.

Secondly,

Secondly, To be more particular: Let us Exercise our selves in those Essential, Indispensable Duties and Vertues of the Gospel, called *Purity* and *Peace*.

First, In *Purity*: For never was there such a Necessity of Entring upon a Religious Penance, and bettering our Lives as now: Heaven, and Earth, and Hell, and all that are round about us seem to conspire our utter Ruine and Destruction.

God himself by many Warnings, and some amazing Judgments, hath evidently discovered that he is our Enemy: And the Devil with Agents and Instruments as Malicious and Cruel as himself, have plotted and contrived (as it were in Hell) our Total overthrow and Desolation.

And now can there be a Better or surer way found out, by all the Art and Wisdom of Man, for our Safety and Deliverance, than what S. *Paul* hath proposed to us in the Text?

Is there any other Course to Reconcile our Selves to God, or which will prevail with him to take our Part, and to pity, help and preserve us in our low Estate, but only laying down and parting with our Defying and Provoking sins, and walking before God in all well-pleasing?

Is there any way for us to Repel the fiery darts of Satan, and to escape the Traps and Snairs that he and his Confederates have laid for us, but the constant Exercise of a Good and Holy Life, under the Shield of an Active Faith, and the daily Exercise of Watchfulness and Prayer?

Is there any way to silence our Slanderers and Revilers, to convince our Enemies, and turn them from the Errors of their ways; but our Studious and

and Conſcientious Guiding our Selves and Actions by the Laws of *Chriſt*, in a Pious and Peaceable Converſation?

And if Providence, for Wiſe and Juſt Reaſons (though Unintelligible to Us) ſhall ſuffer Wicked and Unreaſonable Men to ride over our Heads, and trample us into pieces; What is there can fit us for the endurance of ſuch Sufferings? but the applying our ſelves in time to the learning and practice of Self-denial, Contempt of the World, and ſerving our God *in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all the Days of our Life.*

It was a Miracle once to ſee the ſtrange Aſſiſtances and Succeſſes that attended the Piety and Purity of the Primitive Chriſtians, and it's a Miracle now to ſee Men not believe it, or at leaſt not believe it ſo far, as to experiment it once again.

This indeed is the Cuſtomary, but Deplorable ſin and folly of our Nation, though Chriſtian and Proteſtant too, to Repoſe all its Truſt, Confidence and Safety upon its own Councils, and upon its own Strength; and in the mean while neglect all Goſpel-Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, without which it's impoſſible to be Safe and Proſperous in this World, or Saved and Happy in the next.

Oh never never think that you ſhall be delivered out of all your Troubles, as long as by your looſe and profane lives you Provoke God to be your Enemy, Tempt the Devil to do his worſt, and give his Inſtruments the *Papiſts* any juſt cauſe of Reproaching and Blaſpheming.

There is nothing (next to Divine Wiſdom and Power) which can preſerve our Kingdom and Re-

ligion, but that which nouriſh'd Chriſtianity in its Infancy, and gave It ſtrength to Travel into all Countries, and that was God's Bleſſing upon the faithful Endeavours and exemplary Holy lives of its Profeſſors.

Secondly, Let us Seriouſly and Earneſtly apply our ſelves to thoſe other Vertues call'd Meekneſs, Moderation and Peaceableneſs of Mind: Our bleſſed Saviour gloried in this Character, that *He was meek and lowly in Heart*, and propoſed it to all Men as worthy their Learning and Imitation.

And whatever the conveniency and comforts are, which accrue to every particular Perſon, by following and promoting Union, Brotherly Love, and things that make for Peace: I am ſure the Publick will have the Greater ſhare in it, and flouriſh the better for it.

It was the ſaying of our Saviour, *That a Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf cannot ſtand*: And I heartily wiſh that our Popiſh Enemies do not believe it a Greater Truth than We do: For upon this Maxim they make our Diviſions, as firmly believing they will certainly Ruine us: And we at this very Time keep up our Diviſions, as ſuppoſing they will do us no harm, or as if we believed that *Chriſt* was a Good Divine, but no Stateſman.

Oh Conſider therefore, and Mournfully Pity the Diſtreſſed and Diſtracted State of this our Proteſtant *Jeruſalem!* And let us like men of Prudence and Valour countermine this Popiſh Plot of ruining us by Diviſions, with Reſolutions of Uniting to the Maintenance and Defence of our Eſtabliſhed Government and Religion.

Rev. 14. 13.

And I heard a voice from Heaven, ſaying unto me, Write, Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.

Had Man continued as he was made, Innocent without Sin, he might have been what his Maker would have had him to be, Immortal without death; for God created him to be Immortal, and to be an Image of his own Eternity; he made not Death, neither hath he pleaſure in the deſtruction of the living; but death came into the world through the envy of the Devil, and the diſobedience of man: had it not been for this, we ſhould have been like ſo many *Enoch's*, and have paſſed from Earth to Heaven, not by death, but by a Tranſlation; But becauſe we ſin'd, God ſentenced us all to Die, and to return to the Duſt, out

of which we were firſt taken. It was Sin that made the firſt gap whereby death entred into the world; death entred by ſin, and ſo death hath paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned. The Noble, the Honourable, and the Rich, they ſin like other men, and therefore they die like other men; neither Riches, nor Honours, neither Profit, nor Pleaſure, neither Favour, nor Friends can exempt them from it, Heavens decree is paſt, that all that ſin muſt die, and there is no appeal; hence death is called in Scripture, *the way of all fleſh*, and *the way of all the earth:* all muſt go this way, though not at the ſame time, nor after the ſame manner; ſome go ſuddenly, others by degrees, not one half of the world arrives to the natural age of man, *threeſcore years and ten*; and thoſe that do, their bodies become their burthens, and their years then but labour and ſorrow: *Man that is born of a woman* (ſaith *Job*) *is of few daies, and full of trouble; he cometh forth as a flower and is cut down, he fleeth as a ſhaddow, and continueth not; he dieth, and waſteth away, he giveth up the Ghoſt, and where is he?* This is the ſtartling and amazing queſtion that troubles the greater part of man-kind, namely, what will become of them after death? Some are ready to cry out with the Heathen, I have lived in doubt, I die in fear, and I know not whither I am going: Others that are taken up with the profits and pleaſures, and other enjoyments of this world, dream of enjoying the like in another; like the *Mahometan's*, who believe that after death they ſhall live again to enjoy large eſtates, ſtately houſes, curious gardens, beautiful women,

women, and the like: Others that live like Brutes, think they muſt die like them too, periſh and come to nothing. But we that have learned Chriſt better, are aſſured that there ſhall be a life after death, unto which all ſhall riſe, ſome to go on the right hand into joy and happineſs, others on the left into woe and miſery.

They that die in their ſins ſhall be accurſed; they that die in the Lord ſhall be bleſſed: So the voice from Heaven bid St. *John* write, *bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea ſaith the Spirit, they may reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them.*

That *John* ſhould hear a Voice from Heaven, may be believed without any wonder, if we do but remember that he was a ſpecial Favorite of Heaven: he is dignified with the title of, *The Diſciple whom Jeſus loved*; he had the honour to be ſtill next his Maſter, and to lean on his boſom, a ſign that he had greater favour and familiarity with him than the reſt; he was one of the three that were admitted to *Mount Tabor* at the glorious Transfiguration of Chriſt, where he ſaw *his face ſhine as the Sun*, and his *rayment white as the light*; and where he heard a voice out of a bright cloud that overſhadowed him and the reſt, ſaying, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed, hear ye him*: he was the perſon to whoſe care Chriſt commended his Mother the Bleſſed Virgin *Mary*, for by his laſt Will and Teſtament made upon the Croſs (where there were witneſs enough by) he appointed him to be her Guardian, whereupon he took her into his own

houſe, and made her a principal part of his charge and care: He being then ſo greatly beloved of Chriſt, it was no wonder that he had ſome Heavenly Secrets revealed unto him; and ſo it was, for being in the Spirit, or a ſpiritual rapture, extaſie, or tranſportation, he *heard a voice from Heaven*, of which voice I may truly ſay what the *Jews* out of flattery blaſphemouſly ſaid of the Voice of *Herod* when he made an Oration unto them, *It is the voice of a God and not of a man:* Or if it were the voice of a man, it was the voice of Chriſt the Son of God as well as the Son of man; it was *a voice from Heaven*, and therefore the more to be regarded, for when Heaven ſpeaks, it is fit that the Earth ſhould hear; there never yet came any voice from Heaven but it concerned the Earth to hear it: A voice from Heaven was heard by *Moſes* on the Mount, and it was to confirm the Law, and eſtabliſh our Faith in God the Creator. A voice from Heaven was heard by *Peter*, *James*, and *John* at the Transfiguration, and it was to confirm the Goſpel, and eſtabliſh our Faith in Chriſt the Redeemer. A voice or ſound from Heaven was heard by all the Apoſtles on the day of *Pentecoſt*, and it was to confirm our Faith in the Holy Ghoſt the Comforter. A voice from Heaven was heard by *Peter* in his Viſion, and it was to confirm our Faith in the Holy Catholick Church. A voice from Heaven was heard by *John* in this place, and it was to confirm our Faith concerning the life everlaſting, and the bleſſedneſs of thoſe that die in the Lord; it was a ſweet, comfortable, reviving voice, it made amends for

for the ſad cry of that voice we hear of, *Iſai.* 40. 6. *All fleſh is graſs, and all the goodlineſs thereof as the flower of the field; the graſs withereth, the flower fadeth, becauſe the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it, ſurely the people is graſs*: Whereas the voice heard by *Iſaiah* the Prophet ſtruck all the living dead; the voice heard by *John* the Evangeliſt makes all the dead in the Lord alive and bleſſed: This voice confirms Chriſts promiſe, and our aſſurance of bleſſedneſs in the Life to come. He promiſes us, that if we will hear his voice, believe in him, and repent of our ſins, we ſhall have Life eternal, and never come into condemnation, but paſs from death to life; and to aſſure us he will be as good as his promiſe, he ſent this voice from Heaven to tell us, that they that die in the Lord ſhall live again, and be Bleſſed for ever. This Heavenly truth is ever to be remembred, and therefore the voice bid *John* commit it to writing; *Write* ſay's the voice, *bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord*; a ſentence worthy to be writ by an Angel in letters of Gold never to be Obliterated, but to remain legible to all ſucceeding Generations, that all may read, underſtand, and receive comfort. The voice from Heaven commanded *John* to *Write*: How then dare any Papiſt ſay, that the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles had no command from God to write their Goſpels and Epiſtles, but that they wrote upon the intreaty of ſome Friends, or ſome emergent occaſions? when St. *Paul* ſaith, *All Scripture is given by inſpiration of God*; and St. *Peter*, *That Prophecy came not by the will of man*, but Holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the

Holy

Holy Ghoſt. And *St. John*, That the voice commanded him to *Write*, and telling him what he ſhould write, namely, *Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord, &c. Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord.*

Bleſſedneſs is a thing that every man naturally deſires and ſeeks after; but in determining what it is, and wherein it conſiſts, there is a great diſpute, ſome placing it in pleaſure, ſome in honour, ſome in riches, ſome in knowledge, ſome in vertue. *St. Auſtin's* Obſervation out of *Varro* is well known, that there are between two and three hundred ſeveral Opinions concerning the Soveraign Good, in the enjoyment of which Bleſſedneſs conſiſts. But among *Chriſtians* it is agreed upon as an unqueſtionable truth, that the ſupream Good which alone can make men bleſſed, is God, and that he may be enjoyed both in this life and the life to come. The preſent enjoyment of him here in this life is termed the bleſſedneſs of the way, the bleſſedneſs of expectation, the bleſſedneſs of Grace: the Future enjoyment of him hereafter in the life to come is termed the bleſſedneſs of the country, the bleſſedneſs of fruition, the bleſſedneſs of glory. The bleſſedneſs of this life is ſo imperfect, that it is ſcarce to be termed Bleſſedneſs, we being ſo compaſſed about with ſin and temptation, trouble and ſorrow. No man is truly happy before death, for that is the paſſage to a bleſſed life. Though death be called an enemy, and a terrible thing, yea of all terrible things the moſt terrible, yet this is but in reſpect of Nature; for to men in the ſtate of Grace, it is but

a reſt from their Labours, and an entrance into Bleſſedneſs. But if this be ſo, that the dead are the only Bleſſed, Why ſay ſome, do we not die that we may be Bleſſed? like as *Scipio* hearing his Father tell of theſe Glories the Soul enjoys in immortality, ſay'd, why do I tarry thus long upon earth? why do not I haſten to die? No, death is to be waited, not haſted: They that haſten their own death to avoid ſhame with *Achitophel*, or to fly the terror of a guilty conſcience with *Judas*, or to prevent an intended villany with *Pelagia*, or to be thought valorous with *Raſis*, or to gain immortality with *Cato Ulicenſis*, and ſome others, who hearing of the immortality of the Soul, made-away themſelves to go the ſooner to that Immortality; they that haſten their diſſolution, and prevent Nature, are guilty of ſelf-murther, die in their ſins, and are therefore Accurſed. It is not ſayd, Bleſſed are all that die; no, it is far otherwiſe, for they that die in their ſins ſhall looſe the viſion and fruition of Almighty God, the ſociety of Angels and Saints, the joyes and pleaſures of Heaven, and they ſhall be caſt into Hell the place of darkneſs, torment, and woe, there to ſuffer unquenchable flames, a worm never dying, that is to ſay, the perpetual guilt of a tormenting conſcience, binding in chains of miſery, converſing with Devils, weeping, and howling, and gnaſhing of teeth to all Eternity, but *bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord.* And if the dead are Bleſſed, then it follows that they are in being; *Non entis nulla eſt affectio*, that which hath no being hath no property, but the dead have this property, that they are Bleſſed,

ſed, therefore they muſt needs be alive again, dead they may be to the world, but alive to God, for he is not a God of the dead but of the living, for all live unto him, *Luke* 20. 38. Hence we may likewiſe gather ſomething to verifie that ſaying of the Apoſtle, *Death is ſwallowed up in Victory*, for being there can be no felicity where death hath a victory, the dead's being bleſſed ſhews they have got a conqueſt and victory over death, and therefore *thanks be given to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* But here a doubt ariſeth, What is meant by dying in the Lord? Some render the Original ἐν κυρίῳ, for the Lord: So *Beza*, *Domini cauſa vel propter Dominum*, in the Lords cauſe, or for the Lord. *Mede* renders it as *Beza* does, ſaying the Greek particle ἐν denotes the cauſe for which they died, namely for the Lord and his cauſe; but ſo Martyrs only are bleſſed. That Martyrs are bleſſed is a truth ſure and certain, for our Saviour himſelf ſaith, *He that loſeth his life for my ſake*, and the Goſpels, *ſhall find it.* But though Martyrs have a certain and a great ſhare in this bleſſedneſs, and though their Crowns may be deck'd with richer Jewels than other mens; yet others may have Crowns, and a proportionable ſhare of Glory as well as they.

Beſe

And therefore others do fitly render it as we do, *In the Lord*, underſtanding it not only of Martyrs, but likewiſe of all others that die in the Faith and Fear of God. They may be ſaid to *die in the Lord* that die willingly, chearfully reſigning their Souls to God that gave them, and freely parting with the world,

world, and that die penitently in the act of contrition, as *St. Auſtin* is ſaid to do, breathing out his laſt gaſp with a ſigh for his ſins; and that die devoutly, calling upon the Lord for mercy and forgiveneſs; and that die charitably, forgiving all the world, after the example of Chriſt, and his Proto-martyr *St. Stephen*; and that die peaceably, having made peace with God, and the world, and their own conſciences; they that depart this life with a willing reſignation of themſelves with repentance, faith, prayer, charity, and peace, may be ſaid to *die in the Lord*, and be concluded *bleſſed*. But if we deſire to *die in the Lord*, as all good Chriſtians ſhould do, we muſt reſolve to live in the Lord, for they that do not live in the Lord, are not likely to *die in the Lord*. We muſt not live the life of the wicked, and then think to be ſaved with *Balaam's* wiſh, *Let me die the death of the Righteous, and let my laſt end be like his*: No, if we will die the death of the righteous, we muſt live the life of the righteous. We muſt live then in the Faith and Fear of God, in repentance and obedience, piety and devotion, love and charity, and ſo ſhall we *die in the Lord*, and be *bleſſed*; *For bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth*. And this denotes the time when their bleſſedneſs begins, 'tis ἀπάρτι, *from henceforth*. Some refer this to the time of the former Viſion of *John*, as a conſolation to thoſe that ſhould ſuffer the perſecution fore-told therein, for it was revealed to him in a Viſion, that a great Tryal ſhould befal the Chriſtians in the time of *Dioclesian* the cruel Tyrant, and that their perſecutions ſhould be ſo ſore, that they

were happieſt who died ſooneſt, that within a while ſhould be taken out of this life from doing their part in the *evil to come*, that ſhould die quickly, or within a ſhort time, thereby to avoid ſuch cruel ſtorms and perſecutions, and to enjoy their reward of peace and bliſs. Others refer it to the Reſurrection, and the day of *Judgment*, the time when thoſe *that die in the Lord* ſhall be raiſed to a *bleſſed life*, the time ſpoken of, *Rev.* 11.18. when he ſhall give the reward unto his Servants the Prophets, and to the Saints, and to them that fear his Name, Small and Great.

Others refer it to the hour of *death*; as if the ſenſe were this, that they *that die in the Lord*, from the time of their death, from that very inſtant they are bleſſed; they no ſooner looſe a temporal life, but they find an eternal one: So ſoon as *Lazarus* died, his Soul was carried by Angels into *Abrahams* boſom. The ſame day that the Penitent Thief expired on the Croſs, the ſame day was he with *Chriſt* in *Paradice*. Pious Souls when once they are *abſent from the body*, they are quickly *preſent with the Lord*; when once they depart, they are bleſſed *from henceforth*: And of this we are further aſſured, as by the *voice from Heaven*, ſo by the Spirit of God it is ſo, *Yea ſaith the Spirit*. Let Heathens and Hereticks deny or doubt the Immortality of the Soul, the Reſurrection of the Body, and the bleſſedneſs of the dead, becauſe they know no better; and let wicked and ungodly men deny theſe things becauſe they live no better, for they fancy them not to be becauſe they would not have them to be, their guilty conſciences telling them that if ſuch things be, it

it will be ill with them: Let ſuch I ſay think or ſpeak what they will, ſtill we are to conclude that they are curſed who die in their ſins, and that they are *bleſſed* that *die in the Lord*, *Yea ſaith the Spirit*, ſo it is; for the Spirit ſaith ſo in divers places of Scripture, telling us that the death of good men that *die in the Lord* is pretious in his ſight, that there is *hope in their end*, that all *tears ſhall be wiped from their eyes*, that they ſhall *enter into joy*, that there is a *Crown of righteouſneſs laid up for them*, that they *ſhall be with Chriſt*, that they ſhall *reſt from their Labors*, and that their *works ſhall follow them*. And herein their Bleſſedneſs conſiſts, *viz.* in a relaxation of their *Labours*, and a retribution of their *Works*; in that they have *Reſt* and Recompence; in that they are diſcharged of their *Work*, and for their *Work*; in that they are freed from it, and pay'd well for it.

They reſt from their Labours. We are all born in, and to Labour; we are born by our Mothers Labour, and we live by our own. This Life is made up of care and toyl, pains and pain, trouble and ſorrow. They that are Poor labour for maintenance, and are fain in the ſweat of their brow to eat their Bread all the days of their life: And they that are Rich and have plenty, ſeldom ſay they have enough, but ſtill Labour for more; their endeavour to get, care to keep, avarice to increaſe, fear to looſe their Riches, theſe torment them and diſturb their happineſs as well as repoſe. They that are under a Cloud labour to get from it, and appear ſomething in the World; and they on whom Fortune ſhines, and Honors ſparkles, they labour for greater Luſtre. They that are Low labour to look up; and they that are

High, labour to over-look one another. Some labour for Honour, some for Wealth, some for Knowledg, and some for Health. The best Christians they are, with *Paul*, *In labours more abundant*, exercised dayly in *mortifying the flesh with its affections and lusts*, in denying and even crucifying themselves for those sins that crucified Christ; in striving against temptations to sin, and their Spiritual enemies; in suffering affliction, and bearing the Cross. Thus our Life is a succession of Labours as well as Sins, our sins growing with our years, and sorrows with sins, and troubles with sorrows, so that the comforts of this life are rather *Solatia miserorum quam gaudia beatorum*, comforts of those that are miserable, rather than joyes of those that are happy; and therefore we have reason to conclude those happy that *die in the Lord*, and so *rest from their Labours*, for such are discharged and free, and that both from sin and the evil consequents thereof. The Papists would have us believe that after death the Souls of men enter into *Purgatory*, there to suffer sorrow and torment for a while, till they be purged and fitted for the region of bliss; but they contradict themselves concerning the place, the torments, the tormentors, the extremity of the torments, and the continuance under them: The place some say is in the bottom of the Sea, 'tis a hot fire surely that is not cooled with so much water. Others will have it in *Mount Ætna*, *Vesuvius*, or some such burning *Mongibels*. Another is so ridiculous as to fancy it in an hill of *Ireland*: the Torments, one will have them to be only by fire, another by fire and water, a third neither by fire nor water, but by

by the violent convulſions of hope and fear. The Tormentors ſome ſay they are the Holy Angels, others ſay they are the very Devils.

The extremity of Pains according to ſome are as violent as Hell, according to others they are more mild. Their continuance ſome will have it to be to the end of the world; others about ten years; others during the *Popes* pleaſure, ſo that if he ſpeak but the word they are free. They likewiſe contradict Scripture, for that ſaith, *The bloud of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth us from all ſin*, 1 *John* 1. 7. and if this be ſo, what need of purging by the fire of Purgatory? That ſaith, when the Righteous die they enter into peace, and they reſt in their beds, *Iſai.* 57. 2. And if this be ſo that they are at peace and reſt, then they are Lyars who ſay they enter into Purgatory-Torments. That ſaith, *Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth*, that they may *reſt from their Labours*, as it is in the Text; and if this be ſo, that they are Bleſſed from the time of their death, and thenceforth *reſt from their Labours*, then ſurely they never feel the pains of that hot Region; for Bleſſedneſs cannot conſiſt with miſery, nor reſt with trouble, nor reward with puniſhment. This Text is ſo clear againſt it, that (as we are told) a Famous Doctor of the Church of *Rome*, and one of the *Sorbon-Colledge*, *Picherellus* by name, did ingeniouſly confeſs *St. John* had in theſe few words put out the fire of *Purgatory*: *They that die in the Lord reſt from their Labours*, they ſuffer nothing, only they do ſomething, that is, ceaſe not day and night, ſaying, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*, *Rev.* 4. 8.

8. All that they have to do, is to praiſe and glorifie, adore and enjoy Almighty God, and ſo to reap the Fruit of their Good Works, for *their Works do follow them. Their Works do follow them.*

Operum nomine præmium intelligit quod bona opera conſequior, ſaith a Comentator, by Works he means the reward that follows good Works: By a *Metonymie* Works are put for their Fruit or Reward, Martyrs for their Sufferings, and Saints and all Holy men for their good Actions ſhall certainly be rewarded in the Kingdom of Heaven. No man ever ſerved God in vain; Satan himſelf confeſt that *Job* did not *fear God for nought*, *Job* 1. 4. *David* aſſures us, that *in keeping Gods Commandements there is great reward*, *Pſ.* 11. 18. And in another place, that there is *verily a reward for the righteous. Solomon* tells us, *to him that ſoweth, righteouſneſs* ſhall be *a ſure reward. Prov.* 11. 18. *St. Paul*, that as we muſt believe that *God is*, ſo likewiſe that he is a *rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him. Heb.* 11. 6. *Behold*, ſaith Chriſt, *I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his Work ſhall be. Rev.* 22. 12. He will *render to every man according to his deeds, to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing ſeek for Glory, and Honor, and Immortality, Eternal life. Rom.* 2. 7. He will reward our Good Works, not for your own worth, as if they merited any thing at his hands, but for his meer mercy, and becauſe he delights to be gracious. We cannot merit a reward, for we his poor Creatures cannot poſſibly oblige our Great Creator, and therefore we are taught, even when we have done the beſt that we can, to call our ſelves

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Unprofitable Servants; our Works are not ſo much beneficial to him as to our ſelves; his perfections are never the more, only our gain is the greater. Beſides there is no proportion between the Reward and Work, his Reward being infinite and perfect, our Works finite and imperfect; and therefore we are to reckon that neither the ſufferings nor the actions of this preſent life, are worthy to be compared to the glory that ſhall be revealed in us, and to the *recompence of reward* that ſhall be received by us. The Holy Ghoſt in Scripture aſcribes all to Free-Grace and Mercy, *Remember me, O my God, according to my good Deeds, according to the greatneſs of thy mercy* was the Prayer of good *Nehemiah*. The Prophet *Hoſea* ſpeaks of ſowing in *righteouſneſs*, and reaping in *mercy*; and the Apoſtle *St. Paul*, that the *gift of God is Eternal life through Jeſus our Lord*. Eternal life is not gotten by Works and Merits, but by Grace and Mercy, in that God is pleaſed in Chriſt to accept and reward them. But though they do not merit the reward of Eternal life, yet are they required by God as the meanes and way to obtain it, he having promiſed for Chriſt ſake to accept of them, and reward us for them. We are engaged and encouraged to perform them becauſe they are the end of our Juſtification, for we are juſtified by Chriſt, that we become zealous of Good Works, walk in newneſs of life, and ſo obtain a *Crown of Righteouſneſs* in the world to come: And they are a ſigne and evidence of a true ſaving Faith, for if we believe Salvation is to be attained by Obedience and Good Works, we cannot well imagine any thing leſs than the doing of them

ſhould

ſhould ſerve our turn. True Faith can no more be without Good Works, than the Sun without light, or the Fire without heat; ſhew we then our Faith by our Works, *always abounding in the work of the Lord*, for our labour will not be in vain being our works will follow us.

So much of this Text of Scripture. Now of the Text of Nature, a Text dead indeed in the Letter, but alive in the Spirit; and well may he become our Text who was himſelf a Living Sermon, for his life was truly Doctrinal, he *living in the Lord*, and his death a good Application, he *dying in the Lord*.

As for his life it was according to the deſigne of the Goſpel, and the character of a true Chriſtian, for it was ſober, righteous, and godly.

His Sobriety appeared in all his deportment in his perſonal and private capacity.

He was a man exceeding humble, notwithſtanding the great temptations he had to be Proud, both upon the account of Birth and Fortune; he was (it is well known) of an Antient and Honourable Family; and he had, Providence ſo ordering it, a large and plentiful Eſtate, and to uſe the words of the Pſalmiſt, his Lot fell into a good ground, yea he had a goodly Heritage; notwithſtanding he was ſo Great in the eye of the world, that he was little in his own, he was ſo humble and lowly. He was likewiſe very diſcreet and reſerved, not apt to be familiar with every one; and with whom he was ſo, it was not ſuddenly, but after he underſtood them and their humor: He was a man of few words, but they were wiſe, and to the purpoſe: He obſerved with

with *Salomon*, that in many words there wanteth not ſin and folly, and that *he that refraineth his lips is wiſe*: He knew how to govern his Tongue and his Paſſion, for he kept both from all extravagancy: His calmneſs and moderation of Affection was very remarkable, though he knew how to be angry, yet he ſeldom practiced it, for he ſo ruled his paſſion that it was a hard matter to diſcover any in him.

Chaſtity (a rare Virtue indeed in this Debauched Age, wherein many take a pride in ſin that they may be of the faſhion, adventuring to take Crimes upon Truſt, and to periſh by Credit) this rare vertue of Chaſtity was conſpicuous in him. And ſo was *Temperance*, his moderation in this Point is well known unto all men, how free he was from all Exceſs.

His *Righteouſneſs* appeared in his Dealing and Carriage towards man, giving every one his due. He was a Loyal, Faithful, Obedient Subject to the King, whom he ſerved in the Office of a Magiſtrate, and a Souldier, as a Juſtice of Peace and a Deputy-Lieutenant; he thought nothing too much either to do or give for his Soveraign, being always ready to ſerve him in Perſon and Goods. And as he ſerved his King, ſo he ſerved his Country willingly, truly, and faithfully: I may ſay of him as a *Roman* Hiſtorian does of another, he was *Vir bonus, & Reipublicæ neceſſarius*, a good man and neceſſary in the Common-wealth. His practice was according to his Office to do juſtice. The cauſe which he knew not he ſearched out, and when it lay in darkneſs, his ſtrict and Impartial examination often brought it to

light, and then did truth and justice meet. How many were beholding to him for justice? how many for Counsel? how many for peace? for partly by counsel, and partly by authority he reconciled many differences, and prevented more: his deportment in his Office was grave and something severe to discountenance and awe unruly people; but his carriage at other times was sweet and affable. He was not like *Nabal*, that was so proud and churlish, that a man could not speak unto him; no he despised no man, but would speak to the meanest, and hear the meanest speak to him again. Access to his person was easie, for though his condition were High, yet he was not apt to over-look his Neighbours. He was a good Common-wealths man, improving his Estate, and maintaining divers other mens, by keeping them at constant work all the year. As for his charity to the Poor, though some perhaps suspected it, because he joyned with others in putting the Law in execution against Vagabonds and wandring Beggars, there was a mistake in it; he had charity for the Poor, though not for Beggars. There is a difference put between these by the Law of *Moses*, by the Gospel of Christ, and by the Laws of most Nations. God in the Law ordered, *that there should be no beggar among his people* Israel, and yet he sayd, that *the poor should never cease out of the Land*: The distinction between them is this; *Mendicus est qui Publice stipem petit, Pauper qui non potest se sustentare, &c.* a Beggar is one that publickly seeks for Relief, wandring about, betaking himself to no calling, when he is able to follow one, but making a Trade and Profession of Begging.

Begging. A Poor man is one that cannot maintain himself and his Family, either becauſe through ſome Infirmity he cannot work, or elſe becauſe his charge is greater than his Labour can maintain: As for the firſt ſort, vagrant Beggars, the Law ſaith, *there ſhall be none among you*; and the Goſpel, that if *they will not work*, neither ſhould *they eat*; and the Law of the Land, that they are to be puniſhed, and made to work. As for the laſt, the Poor properly ſo called, both Law and Goſpel, and all civilized Nations require proviſion to be made; and for ſuch as theſe the Worthy perſon I am ſpeaking of had charity and alms, all ſuch were Relieved at his doors, and ſeldom went away empty. From his charity I paſs to his hoſpitality, of which (having greater things to acquaint you with) I ſhall only ſay this, that to thoſe who came unto him, his Table was free, his Proviſion plentiful, and his welcom hearty: As for his own Family, he was to his Lady a moſt loving Husband, to his Children a tender Father, and to his Servants a mild Maſter: But that which was moſt commendable in him, was his piety towards God: He had an honour, reverence, and reſpect for the name, worſhip, and ſervice of Almighty God: He was never heard to take Gods name in vain, or curſe or ſwear: He was a true worſhipper of God, and that both in publick and private: He loved the Houſe of God, and for a teſtimony hereof, he beſtowed the adorning of his *Chancel*, and an augmentation to the Vicaridge: The beautifying of this part of the Houſe of God was a work commendable in it ſelf, more for the time, in that he did it before he repaired his own

House; but most of all for the manner, in that he did it without vain-glory, or hope of praise from men, keeping what he bestowed upon it very private, and so doing his work in secret, for which we hope his Heavenly Father will *reward him openly in the sight of Saints and Angels*. And for an Augmentation to this Vicaridge, he hath given and settled by Will the Tythes of two Townships in this Parish, *viz. Lady Holton*, and *Aill Holton*, which after the expiration of one Life, by which they are at present held from the Church, will return to the Church again. His love to the Church and Service of God will further appear in his constant and commonly early coming to it, and in the reverence and devotion expresst by him there; when-ever he came into it, he fell upon his knees, and made a private prayer; afterwards he joyned with the Congregation in the Publick, conforming himself all along to the Service and Ceremonies of the Church of *England*: he was a constant Guest at the Lords Table, to which he bare such a reverence, that during his stay in the Church, he seldom or never turned his back towards it, but according to the practice of Antiquity worshipped looking towards the East and the Altar. As for his private Worship, without question it was dayly and devout: Besides the Common-prayer in his Family, he used private in his Closet. And as for reading of the Holy Scripture, it was his daily delight and practice; he read three Chapters every day, and the whole Bible every Year; this course he began at Eighteen years of Age, and continued till his death, when he was about Forty-seven, so that computing the time, it will

will be found he read the Bible over nine and twenty times; he began to *remember his Creator in the dayes of his youth*, even then he devoted himſelf to his Service, and his Firſt-Fruits being holy, it was a token that his whole life would be Holy, and ſo it was, for as he began it holily, ſo he ended it holily. In the beginning of his laſt ſickneſs he grew apprehenſive that his end was nigh, and ſo began to put things in order againſt the time: He made his Will, and ſettled his worldly affairs; nor was he unmindful of the concerns of his Soul, for beſides his own Prayers, he deſired thoſe of the Congregation. He ſent for me, and deſired me to give him the Sacrament, which I did the morning before he Died, and he received it with an hearty Devotion, ſaying unto me when I gave him the Cup, O here is the beſt Cordial. He confeſſed his Faith before me, and his ſin before God, and he deſired Gods pardon, and the Churches abſolution, both which I truſt he had. After this his Sickneſs increaſed, Nature decayed, and he dyed of a Feaver, a fiery Diſeaſe, which we hope proved to him like *Elia's* fiery Chariot that conveyed him up to Heaven. To which place of Reſt and Bliſs God bring us all for the Sake of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

FINIS.